



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Urges North Dakotans To Test Their Homes for Radon

BISMARCK, N.D. – In conjunction with *Home Indoor Air Quality Month* and *National Radon Action Week*, the North Dakota Department of Health is urging residents to test their homes for radon and to fix any radon problems that are discovered.

Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed October 2005 as *Home Indoor Air Quality Month* to encourage North Dakotans to learn more about indoor air quality issues. *National Radon Action Week* is observed across the country the second week of October each year to draw attention to radon as a serious public health issue and to motivate Americans to take action to protect themselves from the health effects of radon.

Radon is a colorless, odorless and tasteless radioactive gas formed when uranium in the soil breaks down. Radon is a health hazard that is present in high levels in about 60 percent of North Dakota homes. According to the National Academy of Sciences, radon causes between 15,000 and 22,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States each year.

“Because you can’t see or smell radon, people tend to minimize the health effects and ignore the possibility that radon may pose a problem in their homes,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. “However, radon is a serious health hazard that – once discovered through testing – can be easily fixed.”

Testing homes for radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits that meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines are available at your local hardware store, from the American Lung Association or online. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors or by the “do-it-yourselfer.”

For more information, contact Chris Schmaltz, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.5188.

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